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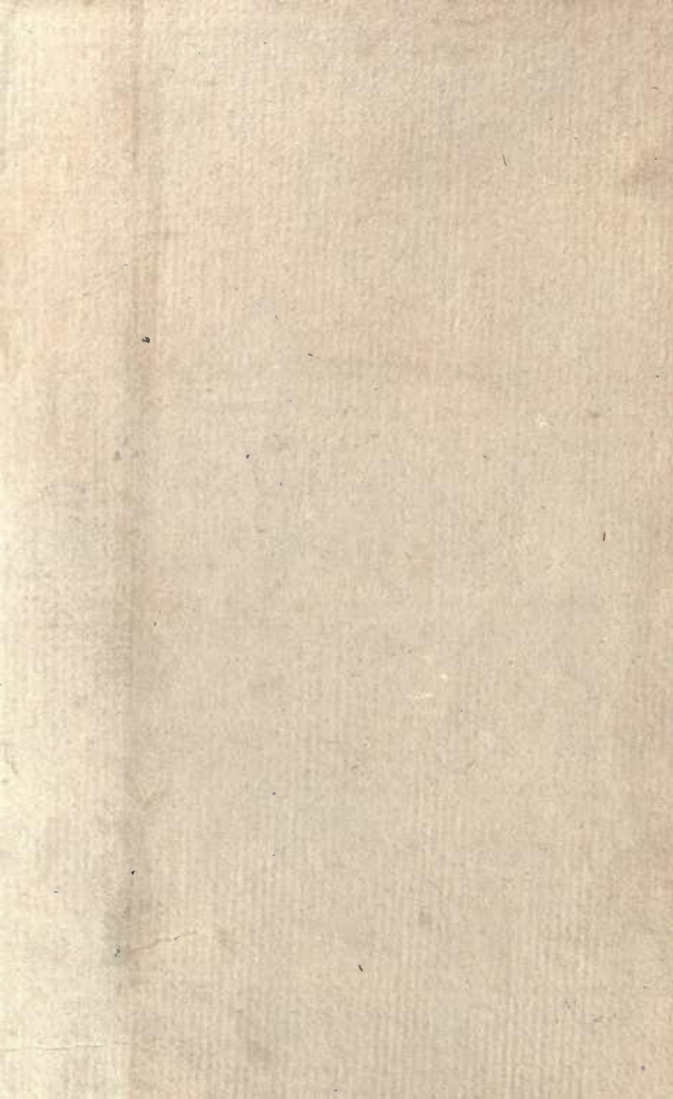




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HOW TO FISH.

HINTS ON ANGLING

SPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR BIRMINGHAM AMATEUR
ANGLERS;

Containing plain Directions as to

ROD, TACKLE, BAIT, &c.

Notes on the best fishing Stations
Near Birmingham;

THE FISH TO BE FOUND IN THE RIVERS THERE, AND WHEN AND
HOW TO CATCH THEM.

BY

J. S. CUBLEY.



ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

BIRMINGHAM:

CORNS, RYLETT AND MEE, PRINTERS, UNION STREET.

1877.

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Contents.

	PAGE
Angling, Months for	40
Barbel, Remarks on	30
„ Tackle	30
„ Baiting for	32
„ Their Haunts, &c.	32
„ Rod	9
„ Reel	12
Baits, List of	40
Bleak	36
Bream	33
Chub	36
Carp and Tench	15
Dace	20
Eels	36
Fly Fishing	37
Flies	38
Fly Rods	11
Fishing Stations	44
Fish in Season	40
Grayling	38
Gudgeon	36
Hooks	13
„ How to bait	19
Ledger Bait Fishing	34
Lines	12
Minnow Spinning	30

	PAGE
Perch, in River	23
„ in Pools	14
Pike, Trolling for	24
„ Dead Gorge	26
„ Live Baiting	26
„ Rods	9
Pool Fishing	14
Pools, List of, near Birmingham	16
Punting, Remarks on	20
Reels	12
Rivers, accessible, near Birmingham	42
River Fishing	17
Rods for Barbel	9
„ Pike	9
„ Trout and Perch	10
„ Roach	10
„ Fly Fishing	11
„ on Holding	18
Roach, in Pools	15
Roach and Dace, in River	20
„ „ Baits for	22
„ „ Where to fish for	21
Trout	27
„ Worm fishing for	28
„ Dibbling	29
„ Spinning for	30
Useful Things, List of	45

To Amateur Anglers.



THE Compiler of this little Work, having had much practical experience in the art, desires to lay before the Amateurs of Birmingham and the surrounding district, a few useful suggestions and hints on Angling, having long felt that something of the kind was wanted. There is no lack of Angler's Guides, but none specially suited for this district. General instructions do not always apply, for what is suitable in one district may not answer in another; for instance, the Thames style is quite unsuited for the Trent or the Avon fishing, and as Birmingham fishermen mostly frequent the two latter streams, these notes are specially designed for them.

It must not be supposed that Angling can be learned like grammar, from a book; only practice, patience, and attentive observ-

ance of the *modus operandi* of skilled hands will make perfect.

Two maxims are to be observed always in Angling. The first, is "quietness," without which success cannot be expected ; the second is, "never do anything in a hurry."

That this little book may prove a useful and acceptable guide is the sincere wish of

THE AUTHOR.



INTRODUCTORY.

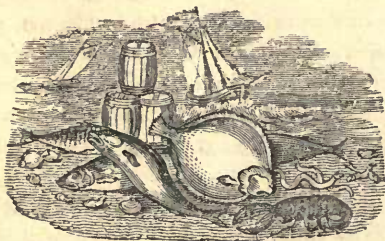
THE pleasure angling affords to the Birmingham amateur, is shewn by the number of eager disciples of Walton, who, upon all suitable holiday times, turn out with rod and pannier in quest of sport and prey. And what greater treat is there to the smoke-dried townsman, than to roam by the river side; the sight of the free^e flowing water is to him emblematic of that freedom he sighs for, and a charmer away of his numerous cares and excitements.

This little book is intended to give the amateur a brief outline of the requisites for the art, pointing out the various kinds of fish and fishing in the vicinity; it is not intended to say more than what is required for this district. There are numbers of Angler's Guides; but they do not point out to the Birmingham fishermen, where to go, and how to go prepared; besides, what is suitable for the Midlands, may not be suitable for the Thames, or the North, either the tackle, or the method, or baits.

If the amateur desires to take up angling in earnest, first let him consider what particular kinds of fish are to be taken in the locality in which he

can get the best fishing ; he then can choose the tackle required, and the baits that are suitable.

There are innumerable books upon angling, which have been written in olden and modern days, and such various and peculiar modes are recommended, that many ardent votaries have been puzzled upon reading different compilations, and seeing the contradictory remarks made in them. Let not these perplex the amateur, but begin by using the faculties of observation. Avoid all new fangled recommendations ; then, by practice, he will soon acquire sufficient knowledge to judge for himself.



Angling.

Rods.

THE rod being a primary consideration in the angler's outfit, a list of the kinds generally used are here given.

The Barbel Rod,

Which also is suitable for bream, eels, carp, and other large and coarse fish, should be 12 or 13 feet long, stout and straight. The usual kinds are the Nottingham, made of pine and lancewood combined, viz., pine butt, middle joint also pine to within six inches of the ferrule, where it is spliced with lancewood, the top all lancewood, or tipped with cane. The other kind recommended is the bamboo; it should be about the same length. A shorter spare top is usually carried to be used with the slug or plummet, for ledger fishing.

The Pike Rod.

The Nottingham fishermen often use the barbel rod with the "slugging top" for pike, it then requires no other rod to be carried in case of wishing to alter the fishing from barbel to pike or *vice versa*. Should the angler however go for

pike alone, then a rod of from 10 to 12 feet is required, and the make and strength can be chosen according to the wish of the purchaser. Choose the lightest consistent with strength; let the rings be large, and not too many of them.

Trout and Perch Rods.

The rod for trout or perch may be varied considerably, according to the nature of the stream to be fished. If for a wide, open water, a rod of about 13 to 14 feet is best, straight, and not too pliable; it may be made after the manner of "the Nottingham," but having the top joint pointed with spliced cane. A bamboo is very suitable for this fishing, and the length for spinning the minnow should be 14 or 15 feet.

Roach Rod.

This is one of the nicest requirements of the angler; there are many good kinds for the beginner to choose from, and he will find some little difficulty when making a selection from a large stock in pleasing himself. Some rods are got up in a very enticing manner, and are apt to take in the buyer, and when he begins to use them he finds out too late how he has been wooed by good looks, and that he might as well have bought a three-and-sixpenny hazel one and saved his purse.

By far the most useful is the Nottingham dace rod ; this is made on the same principle as the barbel rod before-mentioned, but lighter ; they are from 11 to 13 feet long. One about $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet is recommended for general use. These rods are not heavy, or whippy, but light, strong, and yielding, and will kill a large fish with ease. The bamboo is preferred by some to any other, and certainly they are very pretty and light, but in nineteen cases out of twenty they will not stand the wear required of them. They nearly always warp after a day's sport, and when broken are seldom any good afterwards.

The Fly Rod.

The fly rod in the Midlands is used for trout, grayling, dace, &c. ; the variety of fly rods is greater than any other kind, they are also made of more varieties of wood than any other. The usual, and perhaps the most useful, are made of hickory or lancewood, with a spliced cane top joint. They are also made of bamboo, deal, &c. The deal rod if properly made is the cheapest and lightest, but requires much care in using.

In choosing a fly rod avoid all whippy ones. Although they may be the best for a beginner to learn with, they are not so useful as one that is stiffish for about five feet from the butt, and then tapers to a very fine point, with plenty of play,

but not whippy. The reason this is recommended is, that when a good fish is hooked there is more command over it than with the rods that bend from the hand, and when once learned the stiffer rods do more execution, are better to throw with against a wind, and are better in guiding the fly, as they can be kept more upright. The most useful length is about 13 feet, but much depends upon the size of the river, a larger for a wide river, and a smaller for small streams, according to fancy.

Lines.

The fly line should be made of hair and silk mixed, and tapering towards the lash.

The pike line for trolling, is either plaited or spun. On the reel, the spun lines work freer than the plaited, the latter are generally made stronger.

The barbel lines are of spun silk, and they should not be too thick. If the Nottingham style is to be adopted, the thin lines are necessary. 100 yards is usually put upon the reel. These lines are also suitable for trout, perch, &c.

Roach lines should be of the finest spun silk, the finer the better, so that they are stronger than the gut used.

The Reels.

The Nottingham wooden reels are taking the place of all others. A little care is required upon their first

acquaintance, but when once mastered, no other reel will ever be used. They not only give out the line with greater freedom, but they wind it up again at a speed unattainable by any other reel.

The advantages of this reel are so great that no other need be commented upon. They are also much cheaper than any other kind—no little in their favour. For pike, use one about 4 in. or $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter; for roach, about 3 in. to $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.; and the same for barbel.

Hooks

Must be left to the choice of the angler; the Limerick, and sneck bend, are recommended for flies, and a squarish bend for worms. Always choose the finest wire, but mind that the hooks are properly tempered. The latest shape is the sproat, and it is highly recommended.



ON POOL FISHING.

POOl fishing, excepting for pike and perch, is generally a primitive affair, and seldom meets the want of the expert who has tasted the delights of the river; but as all cannot avail themselves of a run to the latter, a few remarks upon pool fishing may be found useful.

As a rule, the same tackle and baits will do for pool as in river fishing. A somewhat longer rod is often of more use, in reaching over weeds and rushes.

Pike.

(See River Fishing.)

Perch.

For perch, the rod should be long, but not heavy; the line of medium strength. Hooks, about No. 8 to 10, according to size of bait used, or of the fish likely to be taken. Use a small taper float. The baits are minnows, worms, caddis, and gentles.

Perch swim in shoals, and if one is taken, more may be expected from the same place. They lurk about the sides where shady, or about piles, roots, and weeds, and in warm weather swim nearer the surface than in cold; the depth must be chosen accordingly. A windy, warm and showery day is

the best for sport. When there is a bite, let them run away with the bait, and then strike quietly.

Roach.

These fish seldom give much sport to the angler in pools, although in rainy weather they are sometimes tempted to bite. In fishing for roach the first care of the angler should be "quiet;" any bustle or noise by the water side is fatal to sport. The rod for pools should be about 14 or 15 feet long, light, straight, and taper; a line of fine silk, and about two or three feet of fine gut next the hook. Hooks, No. 10 or 12. Baits for roach are so various that it is difficult sometimes to decide which are best for the particular time, but bread kneaded into a paste, either white or red, is perhaps generally best for pools; next caddis, then small red worms, as the brandling and cockspur, then gentles. At the end of the season, when the fish have taken to the deeper parts of pools, stewed wheat or malt will be found the most likely bait, especially in the evening. Throw in occasionally a little of the bait you fish with as ground bait, or a little chewed bread, or a few grains, when using wheat and malt. In warm weather roach get amongst weeds; as the cold advances they take to the deeps. Always use as light a float as possible, and sink it so that the top shall be within half an

inch of the surface of the water. Never use a "bulb" float, always a quill; a small porcupine quill acts well, and requires but little shot to balance it. When there is a bite, strike quickly, but lightly, and do not let your fish dash about on the surface, but guide it to the side and take it out quietly.

Carp and Tench

Are so seldom fished for, and so rarely taken, that nothing need be said respecting them further than that tench are sometimes caught when fishing for perch in July or August. They take worms or paste. Fish for them in deep parts of the pool, after baiting for several days previously.

List of Pools near Birmingham.

Blackroot Pool (Mr. Phillips')—2s. 6d. per day.

Sutton Park pools—Subscribers only.

Powell's Pool—Subscribers.

Windley Pool—a fee.

Pebble Mill, Pershore Road—1s. 6d. per day.

King's Norton Pool—Subscribers only.

Kirby's Pool, Bristol Road—a fee.

New Inn Commercial Hotel, Halesowen—1s. 6d.
per day includes trolling. 1s. per day angling only.

Aston Tavern (Mr. Williamson)—a fee.

Tardebigge Reservoir—2s. 6d. per day (boat).

Hednesford Lake, a large sheet of water, better for sailing than fishing.

RIVER FISHING.

THE TRENT affords more variety of sport to the angler than almost any river. The portions accessible to the Birmingham fishermen are Burton, Walton, Wichnor, and Rugeley. Mr. Smith, at Wetmoor, near Burton, has splendid roach fishing; there are also pike, barbel, perch and dace. Tickets 10s. the season, or 1s. per day are obtainable at Mr. Nutting's, Edgbaston Street, Birmingham, and Mr. Street's, Suffolk Street. The Walton and Armitage portions of the Trent are open to subscribers only. The Wichnor water is in the hands of Mr. Wills, Bell Street, Birmingham (subscribers only). The Rugeley water, (between three and four miles,) is leased by Mr. Nutting, Edgbaston Street. Subscribers of £2 2s. have the privilege of taking a friend upon payment of 1s. for the day. This part of the Trent is very picturesque. The views from the north side are attractive, and there is a pleasant walk by the river side beneath shady trees, quite secluded and private for anglers and their friends. From here there is a fine stretch of water upon which there are boats, free to subscribers. Looking over towards Rugeley a pretty view is obtained of

the town with the churches peeping from amongst the trees. To the left is the extreme end of Cannock Chase, glowing with the richly varied tints of bloom and heather—a lovely sight. At the lower end of the water is a broad expanse of deep, a fine boating water, and an excellent home for a numerous family of fish. There are two weirs on the length, and the rushing, murmuring waters are a solace and joy for those who like to listen to their music. Altogether it is a delightful place for the weary dwellers of the town to wander for a day's enjoyment of country air, and for rest, retirement, and health.

The fishing here is varied enough to please the most ardent angler; there is trolling, bottom fishing, and fly fishing, and most kinds of fish may be taken during their season. The Trent is not noted for trout, but they are occasionally taken; there are plenty of grayling, and roach, dace and chub are in abundance. It is also a noted water for fine eels, which are of a silvery brightness, and excellent for the table.

The remarks on tackle, baits, &c., apply to the Trent, Avon, Arrow, Tame, Severn, &c.

On Holding the Rod.

When fishing in streams, particularly for roach, dace, barbel, &c., allow the float to go gradually

down stream, paying the line off the reel, just sufficiently to keep it as nearly straight as possible ; by so doing the float will point slightly up stream, and the bait will be carried first and so meet the fish. Hold the rod at right angles with the float, that it may be in the best position for striking when there is a bite ; never fish with a slack line, as it is impossible to strike the fish if command of the line is lost.

Many questions are asked by young anglers, "How to bait the hook, &c." If the fish are on the feed it matters little, but worms, gentles, caddis, &c., should be drawn "well on" the hook, leaving the point out beyond the barb. For caddis, insert at the tail end and bring the point out amongst the legs, just under the throat. For worms insert the hook half-an-inch from the head, and bring out the point and barb about half-an-inch from the end of the tail. Always use a clean enticing bait. For perch, the hook should not be run through so much of the worm, the ends are to be left long enough to dangle.

ROACH AND DACE.

These fish give excellent sport to the angler from the middle of June to March, the best months being August and September. The fish are then in good condition, and are found in swims freer

from weeds and more pleasant and convenient to the angler. The flesh of roach and dace is sweet at this season, especially if cooked immediately upon being taken. In fishing for them, fine tackle is required, and if the angler expects success, above all things he must study quietness and care, always keeping out of sight of the fish as much as possible. Practice bank fishing in preference to fishing from a punt, particularly on the Trent, as the water is generally so fine, that unless a person is experienced in the management of a punt, it will be of little use to him and frequently an annoyance to others. Dace may be taken as early in the season as May, but roach should on no account be taken from the middle of March to the middle of June, as they spawn about the end of May, and are in condition in about a fortnight afterwards. It is well to bear this in mind, as it is a destructive process to take the fish in the spawning season, and spoils any water, however good, in a few years. It will be a good thing for both fish and fishermen when laws are enacted prohibiting the taking of any kind of fish during spawning time. Let sportsmen study this, and they will never be short of a basket when the proper time arrives.

Tackle Required.

For roach and dace, the rod should be light, straight, and pliable at the top, and about 12 feet

or 13 feet long, and either the Nottingham pattern or bamboo will answer. The line of fine silk, and a Nottingham reel. The bottom tackle of fine gut, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet or 3 feet long is enough. Hooks of No. 10 or 12 size, the latter for gentles or wheat, and the former for worms or caddis. A No. 8 or 9 hook will not be found too large when worms are used. In fishing with gentles put two or more upon the hook.

Where to Fish.

In the early part of the season, and during warm weather, roach and dace will be found on the shallows, and in weedy shallow streams, especially during very hot days. The angler must then find out a gentle swim between or beside weeds, and fish close to them, throwing in a few pieces of worm or a few gentles, to set them on the alert. Fish six inches from the bottom. In the colder weather deeper swims will be found best, and then is the time to take the best fish, and most of them. If it is intended to fish with gentles, make a stiff paste or "dump" of barley flour and a little bran, and knead with the hands in a pan before leaving home, so as to have it ready for use. When a swim is selected, take a handful of the "dump" and make a hollow in it, put in some gentles, roll them up, and throw the

ball into the water so that it may sink just where you can most conveniently fish over it, keeping it as far away from your stand-point as possible. Occasionally throw in a little "dump," and also a few loose gentles well up stream, minding that they shall settle on your swim; this will bring the stray fish to your ground. Proceed to fish very cautiously, keeping the bait about four inches from the bottom. If it is a pleasant swim to fish, but you do not meet with success, drop in a lump of "dump" containing a few gentles, and leave it for an hour or so. On returning you will most likely find the fish have collected around it. Use a small float whenever practicable, well sunk. Never use a "bulb-float;" a porcupine or goose-quill, with a very thin taper cork, varnished, is the best. When you have a bite, strike from the wrist, sharply but gently, and play your fish under water until you get him to the side.

Baits.

For roach and dace, gentles, caddis, paste, and small worms. In August and afterwards, worms, gentles, paste, wheat, and malt. Wheat and malt are best on warm days in the autumn, especially towards evening. The two latter and paste are most suitable for slow water. In still water the fish often suck the bait without stirring the float.

The eye must be kept steadily upon the latter, and on the least indication of a quiver, strike, or your bait will be gone. Fish will often take the bait in their mouths at the top of a swim, and allow the stream to carry them along with the bait without moving the float. This must be found out by observation, and then Mr. Roach will be taken in, although it is sometimes very difficult to detect them and match their cunning. Sometimes it will be found that after taking a few fish at a particular swim, no more are forthcoming. The plan to adopt then is to shift about, and when one swim has done yielding, try another, and so on. At such times very little ground bait is required to entice the fish; an overdose seems to drive them away.

PERCH.

Perch spawn about May. Perch fishing is often taken up when the roach and dace are not biting. Fish for them about the stones of weirs, about piles, in eddies, or at the sides, where weedy. A good sized worm will entice the largest fish, although a small worm will take the most. Use No. 8 or No. 9 hook, a moderately strong gut, and try them near the bed of the river, sometimes quite on the bottom, raising your worm occasionally, when they will run away with it. Give them plenty of time, as they do not take it in at once, and then

strike gently, and do not pull hard, as the hook is liable to come away. If you use minnows for bait, the hook should be inserted in the root of the back fin, or in the lip, give the fish more time when you have a bite than when using worms, about half a minute is required. Perch also take the spinning minnow.

PIKE.

Pike are in season from June to the end of January. There are many modes of fishing for pike, and most anglers have a fancy of their own; but the following are the ordinary methods adopted:—In trolling for pike, a beginner can learn but little by reading, and therefore had better seek a lesson in practice. One lesson will teach him more than a month's study, particularly in the mode of putting on the bait.

In Trolling,

Cast your bait as far away as you can; allow it to sink midway in the water, and then bring it towards you with a jerking motion, to imitate a fish in distress, not winding too rapidly. When a run takes place, do not strike too eagerly, but firmly. Hold your fish firm for a few seconds, but do not pull, for the pike has a bony mouth, and the hooks are apt to come away when he shakes his head, which he invariably does. You must not

expect to haul in your pike at once, for if he is a game fish he will most likely take several runs, turning with a rush as soon as he first sees the bank. The angler must then be very cautious, or he will lose fish, tackle, and perhaps a good length of line. Keep your fish clear of weeds, if possible, and bring him gently home.

Learn to throw from the reel, and fish in weedy streams in summer, and in deep water alongside reeds and segs in winter.

The pike rod is usually about 10 or 12 feet long, although in very heavy fishing one of eight or nine feet is often used; the Nottingham wood reel and a strong silk line (see reference to reels and lines). The hooks are made into a trace; they can be had ready made up; two swivels should be used to prevent the line "kinking." There is a good method now adopted for this by having the lead hung upon the line horizontally, instead of passing the line through it. It effectually cures all twisting.

The trace for snap-fishing has either two or three treble hooks and a lip hook. The most secure trace is made by having the gimp run through the bait and one treble hook at the end, and a separate trace with two treble hooks slipped over, and secured afterwards to the bait. I call it the Cavendish snap; it may be had at several of

the tackle shops. It cannot be described intelligibly without illustrations.

The Dead Gorge

Is seldom used in the Trent, but is practised by Avon fisherman. To bait the dead gorge a gimp and double hook is required. Cut off the tail of the bait and run the gimp through the fish, allowing the double hook to lie, one hook on each side of the mouth. Proceed as in trolling, but give your pike ten minutes to gorge the bait before drawing tight. Your weights must be used according to the strength of the water.

Live Bait Fishing.

Live baiting is a very effective mode of taking pike, especially in the winter. The same rod and line may be used as in trolling, but a longer rod and thinner line will be found preferable. The rod may have a longer spare top to answer the purpose.

For tackle a treble hook is used, with a single hook placed over it to hook the bait by; this hook is inserted in the base of the back fin of the bait. A more secure way is to have a double hook and gimp, insert the gimp beneath the scales of the fish's side for about two inches, and let the hook lie flat, with the points towards the tail of the bait. Fish in places where pike resort to in cold weather,

by the side of reeds and segs, where there is deepish water and little or no stream, about the mouths of back waters, near weeds, &c. Nottingham anglers often use the same tackle for live bait as in trolling (the snap), and strike immediately, only allowing the pike sufficient time to take the bait into his mouth ; in this case the bait is hooked in the back fin by the top hook and the trace dangles by the bait's side.

When there is a run allow the fish plenty of time before striking, say five or six minutes, even ten is required sometimes, and do not strike hard, but first tighten the line, and then lift the rod so as to give the hooks sufficient force to pierce. Use the same reel and line as in trolling.

TROUT.

Trout come into season, in the Midlands, about the middle of April, but are seldom worth taking until they have feasted on the May fly, which generally comes on about the second week in June, but should it be a forward and showery spring, they come into condition sooner; they feast so ravenously upon the May fly, that a six ounce trout will make up to eight ounces in about three weeks.

Use a rod as given in the directions for trout and perch rods. Their dimensions to be according to the size of the stream, or the method employed, although an ordinary roach rod will answer the

purpose, if a person does not wish to go to any further expense.

The line should be silk, of medium strength, and the reel, same as used in roach fishing. The gut must be of fair strength; and the hooks, No. 8 or 9. The baits used for trout are minnows (for spinning), worms, caddis, gentles, grubs, and all kinds of flies. In worm and caddis fishing, no float is required, and only one or two shot, sufficient to sink the bait, according to the strength of the stream.

When trout are feeding they are not at all fastidious; they will take any kind of worm, but for a tempting bait, the clean red worm is always the best.

An excellent tackle is made by having three hooks placed upon the gut as follows:—One at the end of the gut, another on the reverse side the gut, about two inches higher up, and a third on a line with the first, another inch higher still.

To bait this tackle, run the bottom hook in the worm about its middle, and bring the point out at the tail, this will leave the upper part of the worm to be hung upon the two top hooks; it is a deadly weapon, seldom missing the fish.

In fishing with worm, caddis, &c., draw the bait through the water, in strong currents by the side of weeds, around head stones, and in the holes, around roots and bushes, where trout make their home.

When there is a run, strike at once; do not hurry the fish, yet hold him tight from running into bushes, roots, &c.; let him become quiet before attempting to land him, which should be done with a net, if he is over six ounces.

Dibbling.

This is very pretty sport, and most effective; it is practised with either the natural or artificial May fly, and in the Midlands usually commences the first or second week in June, at the time the May flies (the drakes) are about. Neither float nor shot are required for dibbling; a No. 8 or 9 hook, on fine, strong gut, about two feet long is all that is wanted for the bottom tackle. The rod should be 13 or 14 feet long, and stiff to the top joint, which should be sufficiently pliable to *give*, when the fish plunges; some use a bamboo cane, entire, about 18 feet long, but it appears clumsy, and unsportsman-like.

Approach the side cautiously, and when a rise is seen, allow your fly to drop over the spot; if not taken directly, leave the place as cautiously as you approached it, and look out for another rise. After going over sufficient ground, return and try again.

If there is a rise behind bushes, where there is but little opening, the fly must be drawn quite close to the point of the rod, then after getting the point

through the opening, lower the fly over the spot, sometimes it will be found convenient to twist the line round the top, and untwist it again when through the bush.

Minnow Spinning.

Spinning the minnow commences after the May fly is gone; use the same rod and line. The tackle consists of either two, or three treble hooks, which are inserted in the side and tail end of the minnow, and a single hook for the lip; it is like trolling for pike on a small scale. In baiting the minnow, curve it slightly so as to make it spin well. Draw it through the water in places where trout are likely to lie; if you do not get a run at once, proceed to another spot, for depend upon it, if any are there, they have seen your bait but do not require anything just then, you can wait upon them another time. The tackle must be weighted according to the strength of the stream.

BARBEL.

Barbel come in season about the end of June, and afford famous sport. They are found in the Trent about Nottingham in great numbers. The Shardlow water is noted for this kind of fishing, and the Nottingham fishermen are excellent hands at it, being, perhaps, the best barbel fishermen in England. Barbel delight in swift streams in the

summer, and are often taken when dace fishing—in fact the dace tackle slightly enlarged is used by the Nottingham fishermen. It would be little use for the angler who has had no experience in barbel fishing, to commence without first having a practical lesson; but when once shown how, when, and where, he may, if an apt scholar, be able to “commence business on his own account.” The barbel rod is not at all heavy, as used by the Trent anglers. It is slightly stronger than the dace or roach rod, and is made as described in the chapter on rods for barbel, bream, &c. The line is of silk, and is strong, but fine—expert hands use a very fine one. One hundred yards are usually put upon the reel, so that in case of accident there is always enough left for the day’s work. It is necessary to break a few yards from off the end after hard wear when frayed and weakened. Less than one hundred yards would be inconvenient, as salmon will sometimes seize the bait, and any shorter line would give the angler no chance to cope with them. The gut should be very clean and strong, but not thick, and a length of four or five feet is ample. Large hooks are not used; about No. 6 or No. 8 is the common size. Barbel have a small mouth, and leathery lips, and a very small hook will hold them. The float is chosen according to the swim. A swan or turkey quill, quite plain, excepting a ring placed on the

pithy part for the line to go through, is best for from four to eight feet of water. The deeper the water the larger the float, and it will require the taper cork float to be used for deeps. The swim selected to be fished, should be baited the day previously with worms, either whole or chopped into pieces, or both; the latter plan is perhaps generally preferable, because the dace run away with a many of them. From five hundred to three thousand worms, or even more, are used at one baiting, according to the dimensions of the hole or swim. Eleven in the morning is a good hour to bait; the fishing to commence twenty-four hours afterwards. As little ground bait as possible should be used upon the day of fishing; two or three worms pulled into small pieces and thrown in occasionally are generally sufficient, just to keep the fish together. Bait the hook with a clean maiden dew worm, that is, a worm with no ring upon it; sometimes the tail end only of the worm is used, especially when fishing in shallow swims, when dace, roach, perch, &c., are also taken. Much depends upon the angler on the choice of the swim to be selected for operations; indeed, in all kinds of fishing this is one of the greatest drawbacks to the beginner; it requires close observation of the habits of fish, ere he can decide upon the best ground, and be able to tell fishable from unfishable water. It seems instinctive

with some people to know at a glance where certain kinds of fish are likely to lie. Much depends upon the heat, the cold, stormy or sunshiny weather, as the fish change their quarters accordingly. In June, July, and August, barbel visit the scours; in September they begin to drop down into the deeper streams, and as the cold advances, they gradually seek the deeps, and lie during the winter in a kind of torpor. It is little use for the angler to attempt to arouse them from it. When proceeding to fish, gauge the tackle so that the worm shall just reach the bottom, cast the line in at the top of the swim, and allow the float to go gradually down stream. By slightly holding the float back, the worm is allowed to go first, and this also keeps it from touching the ground; guide it thus the whole length of the swim, and upon the least indication of a bite, strike, for the bait being first allows the fish a chance of taking it into his mouth before the float is affected. When a barbel is hooked it gives excellent play, and is often fifteen or twenty minutes fighting for life.

BREAM.

These fish afford good sport in the Avon, from August to October. The barbel rod and line will do for bream. Hooks, No. 6 or 8, the same float as used for barbel will also do in bream fishing, viz., a taper cork, mounted upon turkey quill or porcu-

pine quill. The slug or plummet is also used for bream.

The baits are worms, greaves, wheat and malt; groundbait with the same, or with barley meal, potatoes, &c. Groundbait the place 36 hours at least before proceeding to fish, and if the hole is very deep and wide, one or two pecks of the above-mentioned groundbait will be required, according to the size of the hole. Two rods may be used, one, the Ledger, to rest by your side, upon a forked stick, the other to be used with a float. Bait with a clean lob worm, and lay your plummet in; then proceed to use your other rod with the float; fish close to the bottom, and when there is a run allow one minute before striking. If a large worm be used, the bait will not be taken sooner, and sometimes they will run twenty yards and back before swallowing it. In some counties it is not an uncommon thing by this mode of fishing to take 150 or 200 pounds weight of bream in one day. The broad, deep part of the river is their home.

Ledger Bait Fishing,

Or slugging, as termed by the Trent fishermen, is one way of taking barbel, bream, and eels, especially the latter-named. The barbel rod is used, and it should have a shorter and stronger top

joint than for float fishing. This mode of angling is useful when the fish cannot be easily reached by float fishing, as in deep places in the centre of the river, or where there are cross currents, which latter places are awkward to fish on account of the under current not allowing the bait to reach the bottom. It is also tried when the fish will not bite in float fishing, and the angler grows lazy, or wants an excuse for "a quiet pipe." The ledger or slug, is a flat piece of lead, conically shaped, and weighing from half-an-ounce, to two ounces, the larger size being required for very deep water, or strong streams. Use a bottom tackle of strongish gut about two feet long, and a good sized hook. The bait almost always used is the lob worm. The ledger is threaded upon the line about six inches above the gut, and either a small piece of stick is looped on the line, or a split shot is fastened upon it, to prevent the slug from slipping downwards. Cast the slug upon the ground that has been baited, and hold the rod pointing towards the bait. The point of the rod should be held about a yard higher than the level of the hand; this gives a good position for striking. Keep the line just tight; when there is a bite it will be felt, and upon the fish giving a tug, strike. It requires a heavy strike if the lead is large, or if it is a long distance out. The line should be stronger than for float fishing.

CHUB.

The chub is a winter fish. They may be taken all the year round, but in the winter on a mild day will be found under bushes where the water is five or six feet deep, and in eddies. No bait is better than cheese, kneaded upon the hook, and about the size of a small nut. Fish with the same tackle as for bream, barbel, &c., about mid-water, according to depth. The baits are cheese, spinal marrow, commonly known as pith, dock worm, earth bobs, and worms. Chub will take all kind of flies (even wasps), they are fond of minnows also, and grubs, especially wasp grubs.

GUDGEON, &c.

Gudgeon, bleak, &c., may be taken with dace tackle, the former by fishing on the bottom, the latter on the surface of the water; gentles are the baits for bleak, worms and gentles for gudgeon.

There is no necessity for going further into the list of fish to be taken in bottom fishing, excepting saying that eels may be taken by using the plummet or ledger, baiting a No. 4 or 6 hook with a lob worm, and using a very strong gut. The rod can lie by your side whilst roach fishing. See ledger bait fishing.

FLY FISHING.

FLY fishing is the highest aim of the angler ; unfortunately for the resident of Birmingham, there is but little chance for him to learn this most delightful of all pastimes ; it requires more practice and attention than any other class of fishing, and how can that be had if there is no river at hand to supply the required sport. The Trent, Teme, and Severn, are the only rivers within easy reach for a day's fly fishing. The Wye and the Dove are famous rivers for the fly.

Sufficient may be said in a brief space to give an outline of what is required ; but let the amateur first impress upon his mind the following advice : Do not be troubled with a multiplicity of flies ; to begin with half a dozen varieties are enough, in fact but few more need ever be used. Begin by whipping for dace, it is very pretty sport, and is always more or less successful from April to November. Supposing the beginner has learned how to cast his fly, and nothing but practise will give him the method, (written instructions are almost useless), the following list of articles will form a sufficiency for his wants :—A rod, 12 or 13

feet long, rather firm for a distance of four or five feet from the butt, and then gradually tapering to a very fine point. A line of silk and hair mixed, tapering to the end. The reel may be either a brass multiplier, or the ordinary wooden, Nottingham kind; if the latter, put a leather washer upon the spindle, behind the screw, it can then be regulated to run as desired. Three or four flies on a lash of gut, the flies placed about a yard apart; the gut should be thick where it joins the line, and tapering to very fine at the end of the lash. Always carry a spare cast or two ready made up, in case of accident.

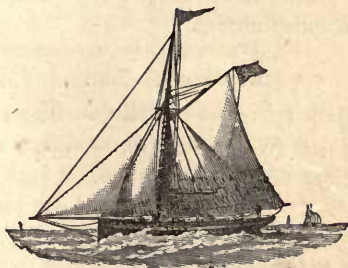
For dace and grayling, fish on scours, swift waters, and shallows; and for chub and trout in rough streams. It will be little use the amateur trying for grayling until he is proficient in dace catching, but should one be hooked, hold him as lightly as possible, and whenever he "tumbles," give him line. Do not attempt to drag him up stream or press him, for he is such a tender mouthed fellow that the hook breaks away directly; follow him steadily down stream and choose a good landing place.

Flies.

For a beginner, black gnat, the black, red, and silver hackles, with and without wings, peacock hackle, cowdung fly, wren tail, and the several

duns, as the brown, yellow, little blue, and sooty, red spinner, and the bronze fly.*

The list of trout and other flies must be chosen according to locality and fancy. Go where you will, you will find a particular fancy for certain things, called flies, but heed them little; a deal of latitude, as a rule, is allowed in these matters.



* This last named is my design, in imitation of the small shining beetle tribe; it is a killer of trout, grayling, and dace. Mr. Nutting keeps them in stock.

J. S. C.

THE MONTHS FOR ANGLING.

THE following will shew at a glance, a list of fish in season, and what baits to use.

Chub and Dace.

All the year, excepting their spawning time, which is about March. The baits are, for chub: Cheese, pith, greaves, worms, flies, earthbobs, dock worm or grub, gentles, caddis, &c. For dace, the same, excepting cheese.

Roach and Dace.

From July 1st to end of March. Baits: Caddis, gentles, paste (white or red), worms, wheat, and malt. They take small flies also.

Grayling.

August to February. Baits: Flies, worms, caddis, gentles, and grubs.

Trout.

April to September (in this vicinity). Baits: Same as grayling, but larger.

Pike and Perch.

Baits: Live baits, viz., roach, dace, gudgeons,

carp, minnows, also worms and caddis. Pike in season from June to January; perch, July to February.

Bream

July to November. Baits: Worms, greaves, wheat and paste.

Barbel.

June to December. Baits: Worms, greaves, gentles, caddis, wheat and malt.

Eels.

May to February. Baits: worms, minnows, all kinds of grubs, cheese, greaves, &c.



THE RIVERS.

THE Anchor which falls into the Tame at Tamworth, contains pike, perch, roach, bream, eels, &c.

The Arrow.

The Arrow is a pleasing river, running from the Lickey Hills to the Avon at Salford Priors, and contains the same kind of fish as the Avon, with a few trout.

The Avon.

The Avon is a sluggish river and seldom clear. It contains plenty of bream, roach, pike, perch, and eels.

The Dove

Which falls into the Trent below Burton, is a noted fly fishing river, and contains trout and grayling in abundance, chub, eels, &c.

The Penk

Is a good little river, flowing through Penkridge, and is noted for large chub and roach, it also contains good pike and perch.

The Severn.

The Severn is rather out of the latitude of

Birmingham fishing ; it contains most kinds of fish, and it is good for trout, grayling, roach, and dace, and the shad in May.

The Tame

Is spoiled by the Birmingham sewage until it reaches Tamworth ; below there to its confluence with the Trent at Wichnor it is a good pike, perch, chub, roach, and dace water.

The Teme.

Accessible at Tenbury, and beyond Worcester, is a noted grayling and trout water, also for chub and dace.

The Trent.

The Trent is by far the best river for the angler in this neighbourhood, as it yields more variety and a better class of fish than any other, and it is the most accessible. The water is clean and transparent. The fish are good for the table, and the water being so bright is a satisfaction to look upon.

The Wye

Is the most picturesque of English rivers, and yields trout, grayling, chub, and dace, there are a many fishing stations, some free by putting up at the inns, and at some other places the fishing is by fee.

FISHING STATIONS.

The Trent.

SHARDLOW, 7 miles from Derby—2s. 6d. per day, all kinds of fish. Also free water by putting up at the Navigation Inn.

Burton, Wetmoor (Mr. Smith)—1s. per day, 10s. the season. £1 1s. includes pike fishing.

Walton and Armitage—Subscribers only.

Wichnor, Lessee, Mr. Wills, Bell Street, Birmingham—Subscribers.

Rugeley to Armitage, Mr. Nutting, Edgbaston Street—Subscription £2 2s. the season.

Avon and Arrow.

Stratford-on-Avon, Salford Priors, Harvington, and Evesham. A small charge for some parts of the river Avon, other parts free upon obtaining permission from the owners of the land. At Bidford, one mile from Salford, by putting up at the White Lion Hotel; Mrs. Vincent, Binton's Bridge, four miles from Wixford. Wixford, on the Arrow—good angling by staying at the Fish Hotel. Terms, 1s. the day, 6d. the half day.

Severn and Teme.

Worcester—a charge is made by the Angling Association for the lower Teme and Severn.

Arley-on-Severn—some free fishing here.

Penkridge—in the Penk 2s. 6d. per day, tickets at the Lyttelton Arms.

Shustoke, the Bourne—a nice trout stream; Inns, the Griffin, and the Bull's Head.

Subscribers to the Trent have the privilege from the Railway Companies of going to the river by any train at a cheap fare; 2s. the double journey to Walton and Rugeley, and 2s. 6d. to Burton, upon presenting their fishing ticket to the booking clerk.

Useful Articles to Carry.

The following useful things should always be carried in the fishing book, ready for use:—Various kinds of silk, neatly wrapped on a small piece of card, wax folded between a small square of parchment, hooks of various sizes, spare gut, roach and other tackles ready made up, half-a-dozen of each kind required, one or two spare casts for fly fishing, and flies kept in a fold of flannel, a disgorging, baiting needle, split shot, plummet, a pair of pliers, and a very fine watchmakers file to sharpen dull hooks, floats also of various kinds, kept in place by an elastic band placed on the inside the book, and a few small rod rings. Articles required for pike fishing should be kept in a separate

book, a single tackle of each kind may, however, be generally carried, and is often of much use. The creel, landing nets, &c., must be left to the choice of the angler, they are often troublesome affairs; choose a light landing net, with a short handle. A clearing ring and line are useful articles to carry.



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Hickory Fly Rod		5/6	7/6	to	30/0
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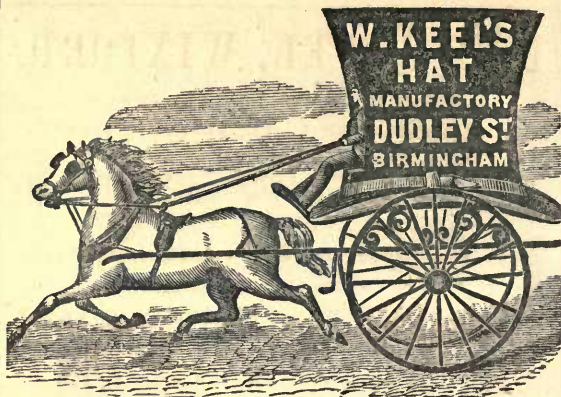
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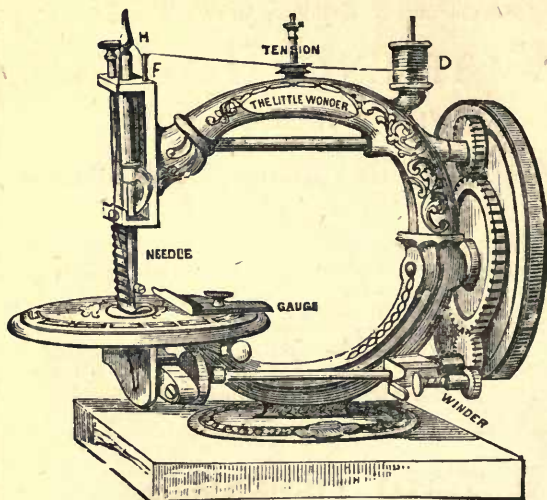
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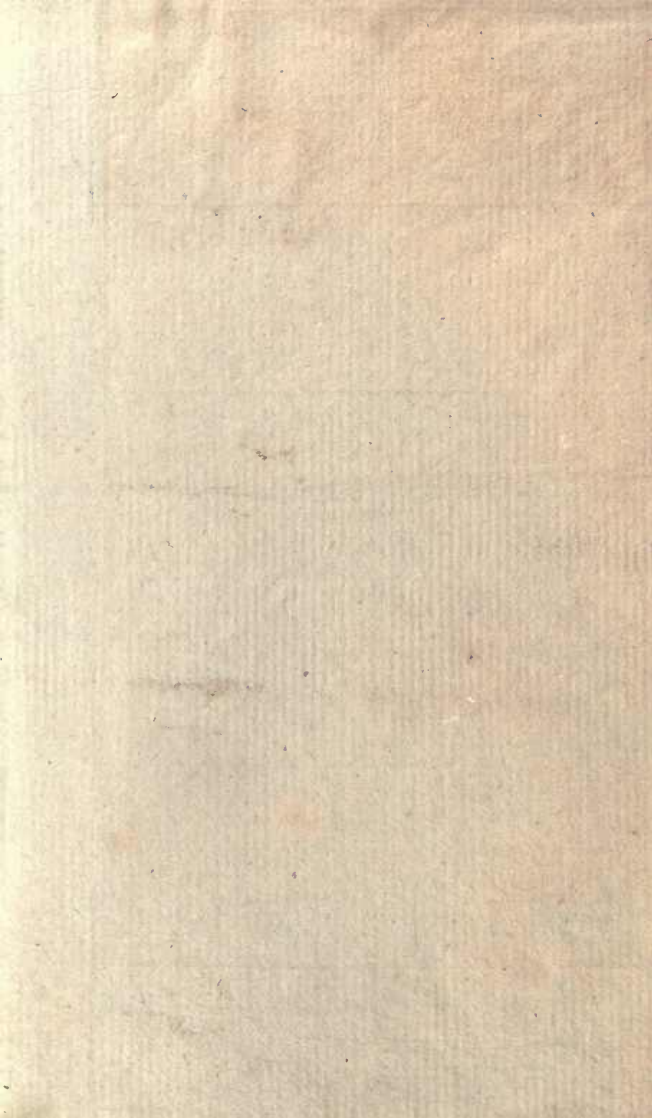
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